

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 4 are amended and withdrawn. Claims 8-37 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present response. Support for amendments and additions to the claims can be found in the claims as originally filed. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Doi (U.S. Pat. No. 6,192,202); and Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Doi in view of Nagasawa et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,384,928, herein “Nagasawa”).

Addressing now the §102(b) rejection over Doi, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Amended Claim 1 recites, in part,

a first image forming apparatus and a second image forming apparatus that are connected to each other via a communication line, wherein  
the first image forming apparatus includes:  
an image reading unit configured to read image data from a document, and  
the second image forming apparatus includes:  
an image storing unit configured to store the image data read using the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus; and  
a reading controller configured to control the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus to read the image data, and control the image storing unit to store the image data read using the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus in the image storing unit.

Doi describes a tandem copy system in which image data scanned on one image forming apparatus 40 can be distributed to additional slave image forming apparatuses 41 for

printing. In addition an external controller 39 can be used to control the distribution of image data between the master image forming apparatus 40 and the slave image forming apparatus 41, specifically when an interrupt is received.

However, Doi does not describe or suggest that the second image forming apparatus includes: an image storing unit configured to store the image data read using the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus and a reading controller configured to control the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus to read the image data, and control the image storing unit to store the image data read using the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus in the image storing unit.

The outstanding Action states on page 3 with respect to the reading controller of the second image forming apparatus, “note that the central control unit 21 controls the image reading (scanning) and storing operations of the image forming system via the external controller interface for the external controller.”

However, Applicants respectfully traverse this assertion and submit that the central control unit 21 of the master image forming apparatus 40 does not control, directly or via the external controller 39, the image reading unit of the slave image forming apparatus 41, or vice versa.

Thus, Applicants submit that Doi does not include a second image forming apparatus that includes a reading controller configured ***to control the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus to read the image data***, and control the image storing unit to store the image data read using the image reading unit of the first image forming apparatus in the image storing unit.

As is clearly stated in col. 5, lines 29-33 of Doi, the “tandem copying operation [of Doi] is defined such that image data is input from one of the plural image forming apparatuses and on the basis of the input image data, images are formed and output from the

plural image forming apparatuses." In contrast, the claimed invention recites that a controller of a second image forming apparatus is configured to control the image reading unit of a first image forming apparatus; this feature is not described or suggested in any way in Doi.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Doi.

In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that the further cited Nagasawa reference does not cure the above noted deficiencies of Doi.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1, and claims depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over Doi and Nagasawa considered individually or in combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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